in vast libraries, and returned in the earlier part of 1788, with some little knowledge of life, and with a considerable quantity of books.

As early as 1786 D'Israeli had appeared in print in the *Gentleman's Magazine* and the year after his return from Paris he published in the same serial an anonymous satire in verse which is now forgotten but was fortunate enough to attract some attention at the time and to win for its author, when his identity was revealed, the acquaintance of some of the minor literary celebrities of the day. Poetry, however, was not his field, and he presently struck a more productive vein. In his twenty-fifth year he published, again anonymously, a volume of anecdotes, sketches, and observations which under the happy title of " Curiosities of Literature" soon became popular. A second volume followed a couple of years later, and the success of this work gave a bias to its author's mental development and eventually determined his whole literary" career. Many years indeed of undecided purpose, of ' hesitating and imperfect effort' and of vague aspirations after fame in the creative fields of literature were still to come; for, with ample means to supply his immediate wants provided under the will of his maternal grandmother and ample prospects secured in the succession to his father's fortune Isaac D'Israeli missed the salutary compulsion which the necessity of earning his daily bread would have imposed. But at the age of thirty-five he renounced his dreams and, according to his son, * resolved to devote himself for the rest of his life to the acquisition of knowledge.'

This crisis in his mental development coincided with an important change in the external ordering of his life. In 1802 he married Maria Basevi,the youngest daughter of an Italian Jew who had settled in England later than Benjamin D'Israeli. In the case of most great men the mother's influence is perhaps more potent than the father's in the shaping of character and career; but the subject of this biography seems to have been an exception.